

~~TO SECRET~~ [REDACTED]
NO FOREIGN DISSEM

SC No. 07355/65

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
1 July 1965

RELEASE IN PART
EXEMPTIONS: (b)(1)
(b)(3)
DATE: AUG 2001

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Chinese Communist Navy

1. The Chinese Communist Navy is primarily a coastal defense force consisting mainly of motor patrol and torpedo boats. Its major ships are limited to some 30 submarines and 8 destroyer types. Its effectiveness is hampered by this lack of equipment, and by a further lack of experience. Chinese Communist naval craft have never ventured far from their coastal waters and consequently lack deep water experience.

2. Present indications suggest the Chinese currently plan to develop a fairly modern submarine force with the capability of extended out-of-area operations. This force would probably be used mainly in conjunction with existing coastal defense units to augment them in case of open hostilities by providing for a limited harassing force in the rear of any superior hostile naval force. The Chinese have also built one G-class missile submarine, now stationed in the North Sea Fleet, but are not known to possess the missiles needed for this weapons system.

3. Peiping apparently has not placed a high priority on the development of a significant modern surface naval force, and has concentrated mainly on the construction of submarines and of coastal patrol craft. The construction of major surface units, and especially of modern surface missile units, would require a major effort which could strain China's limited resources by draining industrial, technological, and economic

NO FOREIGN DISSEM
~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

resources from other sectors of the economy. A more likely line of development is a steady investment in the submarine program and small missile patrol craft for coastal defense and as an attack force against an invasion fleet. Even this limited development, however, must wait some time for the necessary missile system and for the construction of further patrol craft on which to mount it.

Disposition of Forces

4. The Chinese Communist Navy is divided into three Fleets subordinate to Naval Headquarters in Peiping. The bulk of its forces is concentrated in the two Fleets facing Taiwan and the Yellow Sea. The weakest of the three, the South Sea Fleet, is responsible for coastal security from the North Vietnamese border northward to the area opposite the southern tip of Taiwan.

5. The current disposition of forces in the Navy is a rough gauge of the importance of the missions given each fleet. All of the submarine and major surface units are located in the East and North Sea Fleets. The East Sea Fleet, with its headquarters in Shanghai, is the largest of the three, with about 400 vessels including auxiliaries. Its main forces include all four of the Chinese Communist Navy's Riga class destroyer escorts and the majority of its coastal and miscellaneous escorts. It has recently been assigned five small World War II-type Soviet coastal submarines. The North Sea Fleet, with headquarters at Tsingtao, possesses all of Peiping's relatively modern W-class submarines and all four of its largest ships, the Gordy-class destroyers.

6. The South Sea Fleet is the most lightly armed and equipped of the three fleets. Its main surface force consists of about 50-60 motor torpedo and motor gun boats of the Soviet P4, P6, and Chinese Communist "Swatow" classes. In addition, it possesses about six "Kronstadt" class large submarine chasers, its largest ships except for the Fleet flagship, an old Japanese

NO FOREIGN DISSEM
~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

~~TO SECRET~~ [REDACTED]
NO FOREIGN DISSEM

"Kaibokan" I class patrol escort. The Fleet also possesses a number of patrol craft (YP) for offshore defense in conjunction with the coastal observation post system.

7. Although the South Sea Fleet is weak recent activities in its area indicate a concern with the security situation in the vicinity of the Tonkin Gulf. The Fleet command was moved from Canton to Fort Bayard after the Tonkin Gulf crisis of 1964. [REDACTED]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

8. The South Sea Fleet is also apparently constructing three new naval base or shore facilities in the northern Tonkin Gulf area. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It seems likely that tactical patrol vessels will be deployed to this area once the basic naval support facilities have been completed. [REDACTED]

Recent Naval Construction

10. Despite the considerable handicap imposed by the withdrawal of Soviet aid and technicians, the Chinese Communist naval construction program has proceeded toward the goals established before the withdrawal, using designs and plans left by the departing Soviets. Recent [REDACTED] resumption of submarine construction, in addition to a continuing

NO FOREIGN DISSEM
~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

but much restricted program for building patrol and other small craft. Moreover, two new types of patrol boats--Soviet-designed OSA- and KOMAR-class missile boats--have also appeared. These units apparently were built in China, and although only one and possibly two of each has been identified there, [REDACTED] some further units can be expected. However, series construction of these boats apparently depends on development of an adequate missile system by the Chinese. A few missiles may have been provided by the Soviets prior to 1960 as models and for training.

11. The resumption of submarine construction also has been accompanied by the introduction of new types--Soviet-designed G- and R-class submarines. The single G-class [REDACTED] was built in Dairen shipyard after 1962. It is a conventionally powered ship with a long-range capability, and it was designed by the Soviets to deliver the surface-launched SSN-4 ballistic missile, which has an estimated range of 300-350 NM. There is no evidence that construction of any other G-class submarines has started.

12. The R-class, a long-range torpedo attack submarine, is also being built in China. This class is an improvement on the W-class, which at present comprises the bulk of the Chinese Communist submarine fleet. There had been indications before the Soviet withdrawal in 1960 that preparations were being made for construction of a replacement for the W-class, and this plan has apparently been carried out unilaterally by the Chinese. One completed R-class [REDACTED] and six R- or W-class submarines are now in [REDACTED] construction in Chinese shipyards.

13. Recent [REDACTED] construction of at least one submarine tender in Shanghai. Construction of this ship, the first of its kind in the Chinese fleet, strongly suggests the Chinese intend to strengthen their submarine force by providing it with a long-range capability. Like the rest of the Chinese Navy, the submarine force has heretofore been relegated to a coastal defense role, and no Chinese Communist submarines have ever been identified outside territorial waters.

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]
NO FOREIGN DISSEM

14. The Chinese also are apparently proceeding with an indigenous effort to design and produce their own naval craft. This program has thus far been restricted to small patrol craft, such as the Swatow- and Shanghai-class patrol and gun boats. However, the submarine tender, mentioned above, is notably different in its superstructure from Soviet tenders. In addition, the Chinese are now in the final stages in building one of the largest ship model basins in the world. The new facility, located near Shanghai, will provide facilities to test ship models and predict the performance of full-scale ships--a necessity for a native construction and design program. The Navy until now has been required to rely on a far smaller facility located near Peiping.

Naval Missile Development

15. Although the construction of the G-class submarine, as well as the Osa- and Komar-class missile patrol boats, implies a commitment to a naval missile development program, no firings of such missiles have been detected thus far. These missile ships were probably expected to use conventionally armed missiles provided by the USSR.

16. Nevertheless, the Chinese probably intend to develop their own missile systems for naval purposes if they have not already begun to do so. IL-28 naval bombers have been noted at the missile test range at Shuangchengtzu occasionally in the past, suggesting a naval interest in testing there.

17. If the program were given high enough priority and met with no serious problems, an initial Chinese-produced MRBM for naval use might be developed as early as 1966-67.

Conclusions

18. The basic outlines of the Chinese Communist Navy have not materially changed since the late 1950s. It is a light, poorly equipped coastal patrol and defense force whose main combatant ships are a few Soviet-designed patrol craft and a relatively large but inexperienced submarine fleet.

NO FOREIGN DISSEM
~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]
NO FOREIGN DISSEM

19. Since the Soviet withdrawal of technicians in mid-1960, causing the temporary near-collapse of the Chinese ship-building effort, a determined Chinese effort has been made to maintain an indigenous ship-building program. Although this program has thus far relied on designs provided by the Soviets prior to the withdrawal, the Chinese have taken the steps necessary to test new designs. There is some tentative evidence this effort may now be bearing fruit, but the process is only in its initial stages and is as yet indistinct. However, the appearance recently of newly constructed R- and G-class submarines and a probable submarine tender suggest strongly that the main Chinese Communist effort will parallel that of the Soviets, and will aim at the construction of a large, modern submarine force eventually with long-range capabilities. Once the new G-class missile submarine has been made operational, it is possible the Chinese may also intend to exploit it for its limited value as a strategic strike threat.

20. The capabilities of the Chinese Communist Navy, and of the South Sea Fleet in particular, to support the North Vietnamese in any material fashion appear sharply limited. The Chinese may be providing some advisory and technical personnel to the North Vietnamese Navy, along with necessary spare parts for patrol boats delivered from China in 1961. There has been no reliable recent evidence of the training of North Vietnamese naval personnel in China, although some have been trained there in the past.

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]
NO FOREIGN DISSEM

TO SECRET [REDACTED]
NO FOREIGN DISSEM

CHINESE COMMUNIST NAVAL ORDER OF BATTLE

Type	Fleet Subordination		
	North	East	South
SUBMARINES			
G-class	1	-	-
W-class	21	-	-
MV-class	-	3	-
DESTROYERS, ESCORTS			
Riga-class (DE)	-	4	-
Kronstadt-class (PC)	8	10	6
Escorts, Misc. (PF)	2	7	1
MOTOR GUNBOATS AND TORPEDO BOATS			
Osa-class Missile Gunboat	1	-	-
Komar-class MGB (PTC)	1	-	-
Motor Torpedo Boats			
P4/P6 (PT)	60	55	45
Swatow-class Motor Gunboats			
(PGM)	8	20	23
Shanghai-class Motor Gunboats			
(PTF)	-	12	-
MINESWEEPERS	15	17	4
AMPHIBIOUS SHIPS	63	135	61
AUXILIARIES	21	17	18
SERVICE CRAFT			
District Patrol Craft (YP)	70	50	60
Miscellaneous Aux (YAG)	40	60	100
OLD UNITS			
Submarines, S-class (OSS)	2	2	-
Destroyers, Gordy-class	4	-	-
Escorts	-	5	-
Motor Gunboats	-	-	2
Other	1	-	4

NO FOREIGN DISSEM
TOP SECRET [REDACTED]

